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ABSTRACT

In response to regular faculty complaints about mainstreamed students, a 5-week Summer Special Education Program was implemented in 1986 at the Western Navajo Agency's Tuba City Boarding School. The program's purpose was to train regular teachers and support personnel in special education procedures and practices and to provide the exceptional student with instruction beyond the 180 day school year. Participants included 4 teachers, 2 teacher aides, 7 staff members, and 11 boarding and 18 community students. The program was assessed using the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to measure shifts in teacher attitudes, the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills to evaluate student academic performance, and a criterion-referenced questionnaire to record shifts in dormitory and teacher aide performance. Data analysis suggested program procedures caused significant shifts in student/teacher interpersonal relationships, student learning, and aide knowledge of special education. Results indicated the program effectively prepared non-special education personnel to provide an appropriate and least restrictive mainstreamed environment. Not measured, but an integral contributor to the program's success, was the open communication among staff. The Summer Program was the first phase of a year of training in special education to implement the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and provide better instruction to the mainstreamed student. (NEC)

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Summer Days

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August 1986

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The Navajo Nation is the largest American Indian Tribe in the United States and resides on a reservation equivalent in square mileage to the State of West Virginia. A 1980 census determined low socio-economic population of 160,000 live in isolated "family camps" and work in mining, agriculture, ranching or taxpayer supported service organizations. Four reservation communities and five "border towns" are centers for the purchasing of goods and the acquiring of services. In every phase of life, the Navajo culture and language is practiced.

Navajo children are educated in Bureau of Indian Affairs facilities, state schools, church programs or Tribally funded sites. Academic is provided during a six-and-one-half-hour school day throughout a 175 to 180 day academic year. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the only institution charged by treaties with the education of the Navajo people. To expedite educational services, five Agencies are strategically located throughout the reservation and adhere to Federal/Tribal trust agreements which promote the child's culture and socio-economic need.

The Western Navajo Agency educates 8,323 kindergarten through high school age Navajo children. Twelve schools are located within the Agency's 1,500 square mile boundary and offer a variety of programming. A faculty of 410 teach an academic pretest/posttest curriculum.

Tuba City Boarding School is a Western Navajo Agency facility charged with educating 1,000 kindergarten through eighth grade students. A faculty of 50 implement a pretest/posttest curriculum which is in accordance with Agency instructional guidelines and cohesive with Bureau philosophy. One hundred exceptional children are instructed by three special education teachers and provided related services by Agency special education office personnel.

For the past several years, the school's special education coordinator received complaints from the regular faculty about the mainstreamed child. These complaints focused on the mainstreamed student possibly being placed into an inappropriate and a restrictive environment because of regular educator limited knowledge of special education. In September, 1985, to ascertain whether these complaints were expressed by a few or shared by the majority, survey was conducted of: 1) regular educator knowledge of special education; 2) the number of students mainstreamed; 3) the amount of time the student is mainstreamed; and 4) whether the regular educator desired training in special education. The survey revealed that the regular educator had minimal knowledge of special education, eighty-five percent of the exceptional population was mainstreamed three to five hours daily, and the regular educator desired training. Based on these results, a Summer Special Education Program was implemented. The Program's purpose was to train regular teachers

and support personnel in special education procedures and practices and provide the exceptional student with instruction beyond the 180 day school year.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

From June 2, 1986, through July 3, 1986, Tuba City Boarding School provided supplemental special education instruction to 29, second through eighth grade, students. This five week undertaking was eight hours a day, five days a week, for staff. Eleven students were housed in a dormitory and received a 24 hour a day, five day a week, instructional program. Eighteen students, from the Tuba City community received an eight hour a day, five day a week, program. Four regular teachers and two special education program aides team taught reading, math, language arts, spelling and behavior management skills for three-and-one-half-hours a day. Five dormitory aides provided morning and early evening home living skills and recreational activities. Two cooks served three meals a day throughout the Program.

In May, Program staff met with special education faculty and discussed students in detail. Attention was given to FY-86 end-of-the-year achievement test results and the Annual Review of Placement Committee FY-87 Individualized Educational Plan goals. Student instructional strengths and weaknesses were

noted with special education teacher recommendations given as to how to maximize instruction.

At the Program's beginning, student folders were distributed and amalgamated with staff informal student performance test results into Summer Individualized Educational Plan goals. Weekly, the staff assessed student performance, documented achievement and adjusted instruction. At the Program's end, student performance was quantified and condensed into "exit reports" for special education teacher and parent use.

To ensure the Program's purpose, the Director frequently assessed various settings. The Director slept in the dormitory and ate all meals with students. Daily, classrooms were monitored to ensure that instruction was in accordance with Summer Individualized Educational Plan goals. In every setting, lesson plans are reviewed and used as a guide to measure the appropriateness of the activity. At the end of every observation, verbal and written recommendations were made to the staff involved. Monday morning and Friday afternoon, while students were being transported to and from the School, the Director and staff discussed topics of concern or problems arising in the Program.

Because of 100+ afternoon temperatures and the lack of adequate air conditioning, classrooms became inappropriate for

instruction. Therefore, Tuesday through Thursday, recreational activities were provided. Each week, staff developed highly structured activities which were geared to the student's age, interest, and level of ability.

METHOD:

Three instruments were chosen to assess the Program. The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory evaluated shifts in teacher attitudes. The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills measured shifts in student academic performance. A Director prepared Criterion-Referenced Questionnaire evaluated shifts in dormitory and teacher aide performance. The Inventory and the Questionnaire were administered during the Program's first and final week. The Brigance was special education teacher administered in May and regular teacher administered the Program's final week. Three teachers were administered the Inventory, six aides the Questionnaire and twenty-four students were assessed by the Brigance. Data were compiled and statistically treated in accordance with a pretest/posttest, no control group, experimental research design with a two-tailed T-test of $T=\frac{d}{SD/\sqrt{N}}$ at an alpha of .05.

The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory's pretest and posttest raw scores were converted via the Inventory's "Percentile Rank Equivalents for Raw Score," Rural Teacher heading. These data

were statistically treated with means and standard deviations computed. In turn, these data were analyzed for pretest/posttest differences. The Inventory's pretest mean was .36 with a standard deviation of .115, while its posttest mean was .53 with a standard deviation of .153. The mean differences was .167 with a standard deviatin of .06. On the basis of these difference data, a T-score of 5.57 was obtained and measured against a critical T-score of 3.18. These results indicate that teachers significantly shifted in student/teacher interpersonal relationship attitudes.

The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills five academic area raw scores were manual converted to grade level scores. These grade level scores were added together with a mean grade level computed. Grade level means was again added with a mean of means and a standard deviation computed. The Brigance pretest mean of the means was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.24. The posttest mean of the means was 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.30. The mean of the means difference was .439 with a standard deviation of .23. On the basis of these difference data, a T-score of 8.78 was obtained and measured against a critical T-score of 2.06. These results indicate that students significantly shifted in reading, math and spelling.

A Director prepared Criterion-Referenced Questionnaire assessed aide/student interaction, classroom environment and teaching

techniques. A Likert Scale of one (poor) through five (superior) was attached to the Questionnaire's 37 stems. Questionnaires were Director completed according to observed impressions of the setting. Each marked stem was assigned a Likert Scale score. These scores were added together with a mean tabulated. Means were again added with a mean of the means and standard deviation computed. The Questionnaire's pretest mean of the means was 3.84 with a standard deviation of 1.38. A posttest mean of the means of 4.70 with a standard deviation of 1.42 was also computed. The mean of the means difference was .86 with a standard deviation of .2269. On the basis of these difference data, a T-score of 9.24 was obtained and measured against a critical T-score of 2.45. These results indicate that classroom aides significantly shifted in student interaction, classroom environment and teaching techniques.

CONCLUSION:

Tuba City Boarding School conducted a five week Summer Special Education Program for the purpose of training regular education personnel in special education and providing exceptional students with instruction beyond the 180 day school year. Analysis of data overwhelmingly suggest that Program procedures caused significant shifts in student/teacher interpersonnel relationships, student learning, and aide knowledge of special education. Furthermore, these results indicate that the Program

effectively prepares non special education personnel to provide an appropriate and a least restrictive mainstreamed environment.

Results of the Inventory conclude that the Program provided the educator with necessary experiences which signficantly shifted attitudes. A review of the Program beginning data reveal that teachers wanted to dominate the classroom. However, posttest data show that scores increased by 20 points, suggesting that teachers dominated the classroom less.

The Brigance measured the Program's impact on student learning. Student knowledge of reading, math and spelling statistically indicate that there was a significant gain. A comparison of pretet and posttest information show that the student increased in achievement an average of one-half-year.

At the beginning of the Program, Questionnaire assessed aide performance was a Likert Scale of "average." By the Program's end, aide performance was a Likert Scale "superior." Analysis of these data, suggest that there was a significant shift in aide knowledge of special education procedures and this shift provided a superior learning environment.

Not measured, but an integral contributor to the Program's success was the open communication among the staff. Staff quickly learned that talking with one another promoted a more

positive educational environment. Often, staff exchanged information about a student or an instructional technique that had worked and wanted to be shared. Staff openly discussed how the school year regular and the special education programs conflicted and how they could redress this differences with what was learned in the Program. Moreover, dormitory personnel learned that the exceptional student needed a highly structured environment and that Program developed lesson plans enabled such a setting to be developed; something which was not done during the school year.

Tuba City Boarding School is a Bureau of Indian Affairs facility concerned with the education of all Navajo children. For the past several years, concerns about conflicts of instruction by the regular and the special education programs have been raised. Out of a desire to provide better instruction to the mainstreamed student, regular faculty will be receiving a year of training in special education and the Summer Special Education Program is the first phase. Training is the key to implementing P.L. 94-142 and the training of regular faculty is paramount to special education program success. Tuba City Boarding School has imbarked on an innovative undertaking and is the model from which other school faculty can imitate.